Voice of First Year experience, from Devin, a former UCDSB student:

The most important message I could think of is:

- If you have or know you can receive academic accommodations, prepare the documentation now and look into the steps required. That way, they’ll be there when you need them (My biggest regret was NOT setting them up…)
- Also, at the end of the day, your health is super important. Make sure you’re eating properly, sleeping enough, asking for help when you need it, etc… otherwise, it piles up and creates problems.

These are a few things that cover important topics from the Uni/College workshop:

- If you can write fast enough, then by all means hand write notes. However, if you’ll end up missing out on important content, you might be better off if you type them out. Regardless, you can format them however you like after lecture.
- Experiment with where you do work and study a little bit. You’ll get to explore campus and find somewhere that works for you.
- Scheduling everything into one space such as a planner or your phone’s calendar (class schedule, due dates, etc) is best, so you can see absolutely everything. (If you need to you can also schedule things like study time)
- Have important phone numbers saved (Campus first aid, campus security, if living in residence the don-on-call, other important numbers you find or are given to you at the school). These can come in handy in medical situations, safety situations, you name it. Also good to have in case somebody has had too much.
- Know the steps you can take if you or someone else is sexually assaulted, including university and city resources. (I actually did end up having to relay this information. Knowing makes a difference.)
- BE CAREFUL around new people (ESPECIALLY orientation week). You don’t know these people. Don’t let them take advantage of you.
- Know the services offered by the school or department (One of my favorites at Queen’s is the Peer Support Centre. [Trained students to talk with, drop in, GIANT binder of resources available])
• Downloading Google Maps, and then downloading the local map (will work without data/wifi)

• Pinterest is great for recipes, and various DIY and organization tips

• If you don’t get “involved” right away, it’s perfectly fine. The same goes for major choice. There are so many things that you’ll have the option to do.

• You meet a lot of people in the first month, and then some year round... Everyone wants to make friends. Your friend groups might change over the year, and that’s perfectly okay. (ALSO you don’t have to limit yourself to one)

• A good answer to people asking for money on the street is “Sorry, I don’t carry cash”. What also works is “Sorry, I’m not sure”. If feeling uncomfortable, walking into a store works (Other eyes, cameras, enclosed space where the interaction can be heard)

**Thank you Devin!**